

The Watchlist

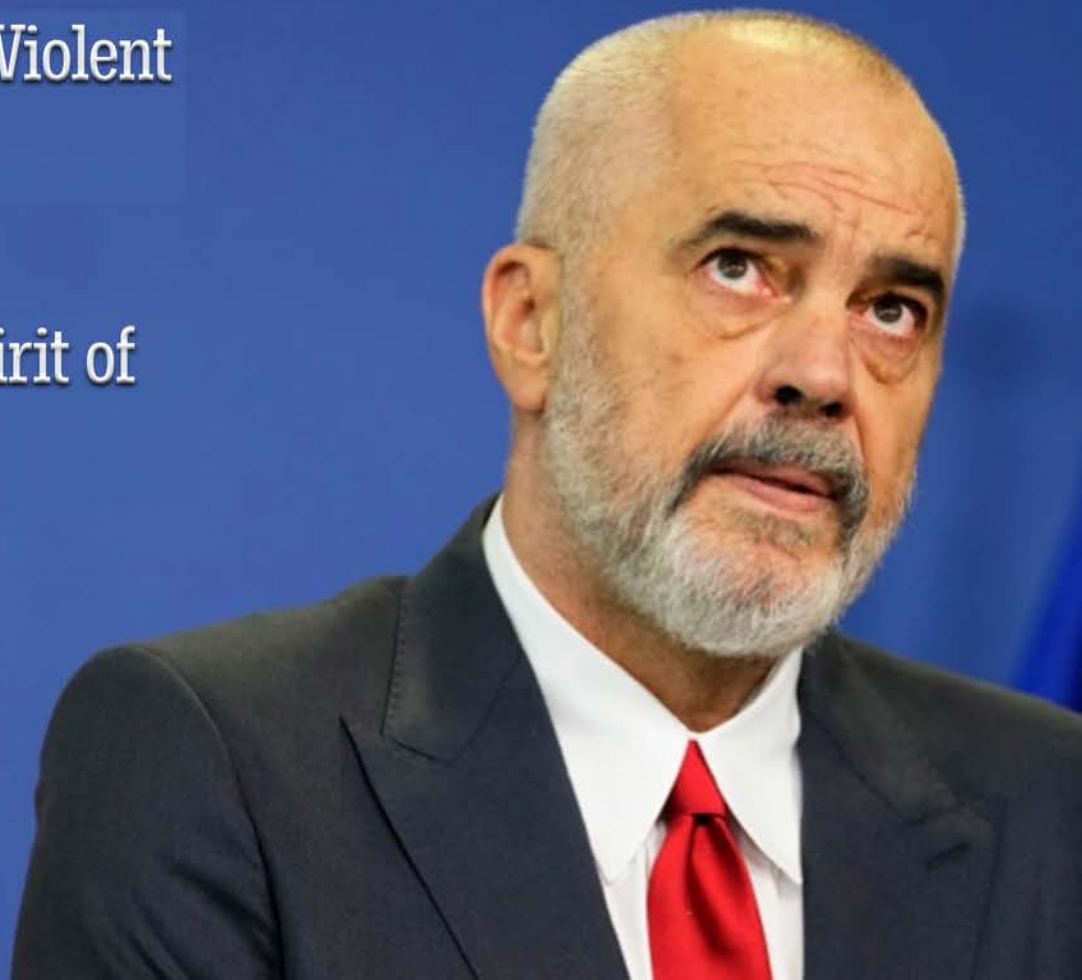
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Monitoring Terrorist Threats in West Asia

Loser of a Failing Game

Four Decades of Violent
Totalitarianism

Exploring the Spirit of
Violent Cults



03

Albania, the Loser of a Failing Game

05

The Origin of Anti-imperialist Camping in Post

14

When did the Violence Begin?

An Overview of MeK's Terrorist Attacks in Iran Before June 20, 1981

16

June 20, 1981 Riot

18

Rain of Blood

A Review of MeK's Terrorist Attacks in Summer of 1981

24

From June 1981 to June 2022

28

Death is Our Business

The MEK's Raids on Iranians Abroad

32

Former Iranian Spokesman

Tirana is Playing a Dangerous Game by Hosting the MeK

40

When Will Iran Take Revenge on Albanian-based "Traitors"?

43

Exploring the Spirit of Violent Cults

What Hashashin, Colonia Dignidad and MeK Have in Common?

46

A Review of Freedom of Mind

Helping Loved Ones Leave Controlling People, Cults and Beliefs

Albania, the Loser of a Failing Game

A long time before announcing the unilateral termination of relations between Albania and Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran had declared its protest against Tirana because of its support for the Mojahedin-e Khalq terrorist group (MeK). Basically, these protests were not because of giving shelter to this notorious terrorist group in a European country in the Balkans as from the very beginning, the Albanians had apparently pledged that this group would not conduct any anti-Iran activities on their soil. However, Iran's protests against Albania became stronger when Tirana manifested more direct support for MeK and employed security measures against Iran. This ever-increasing support gained momentum and took on a completely hostile approach, which in no way, represented Albania's initial claim that there were humanitarian motives in sheltering the MeK on their soil.

With the ongoing support of Albanian authorities for a hated anti-patriotic terrorist group, and the constant visits of the current and former officials of Tirana to the camp of this group as well as the presence of American political figures there and meeting with the leader of this terrorist group all caused Iran to assume a more proactive stance in such a way that in recent months, we have witnessed a few Iranian officials' threats against Albania. In July, this small country in the Balkans was subjected to an unprecedented cyber-attack, which targeted its infrastructure and seriously disrupted the work routine of various government departments for a while. This disruption indicated how vulnerable this country is in the face of such actions that generally occur in different parts of the world. Tirana accused Iran of this attack without providing documentation, although at the same time, Russia was also accused in some Albanian media. But in the end, Iran was considered the prime suspect in the incident. Of course, the authorities of our country have called these accusations baseless.

Acting unconventionally, Tirana unilaterally severed diplomatic ties with Iran a few weeks later. This action was strongly supported by senior American and Israeli officials indicating that the cyber-attack on Albania

is probably part of a scenario designed beyond Albanian borders to put pressure on and enforce sanctions against Iran.

During the ongoing riots in the country and simultaneously with the MeK's incitement of people from Albania to pick up arms, the stances of the Albanian authorities against Iran became more intense to the point where the Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama spoke of resumption of diplomatic ties with Iran in a post-Islamic Republic government.

In the accelerated process of the Albanian government's stances and actions against Iran, its joint request with the United States to hold an informal UN Security Council meeting to "focus on Iran protests" would be considered as official entry of this country into the situation which the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has described as "Hybrid War".

The fact that the informal meeting of the Security Council was held at the joint request of Albania and the United States shows that despite being a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Tirana has not been able to hold this anti-Iran event on its own, and in this case has been manipulated by the U.S government. It does not matter for the U.S. government what threats can adopting hostile approaches toward Tehran bring to Albania, the threats that Tirana could avoid by controlling and limiting the MeK. It seems that Albania is now playing a role in a game that the U.S. government and the MeK have planned since four decades ago, without knowing the real volume of dangers and threats that may be facing.

S.M.Javad Hashemi Nejad



The Origin of Anti-imperialist Camping in Post -Revolutionary Iran

By Ali Rabie*

I remember that I and my dear friend Mr Abolghasem Sarhadizadeh¹ did not attend the weekly briefing session of the Islamic Republic Party on that day. We cried a lot that night, both for Beheshti and for human innocence.

Where did a particular set of so-called anti-imperialist slogans come from? How did these slogans, which originally had a non-revolutionary origin and were coined and spouted in the Marxist-Leninist left camp, migrated to a markedly different camp?

The first group that flew in the face of the revolution was not anti-revolution in the conventional sense of the word, but the so-called “professional revolutionaries”. That is, those who regarded the revolution as incomplete and imperfect because of its fundamental difference from the October Revolution in Russia. They described the revolution as more of a popular “uprising” that lacked the standards set in the models of other revolutions.

However, the author believes that these theories and strategies are put forward because of their exclusion from participating in power-sharing arrangements. And they are

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1- Representative of the people of Tehran in the Islamic Consultative Assembly during the third, fifth and sixth terms.

not proposed from a pure belief source, albeit false.

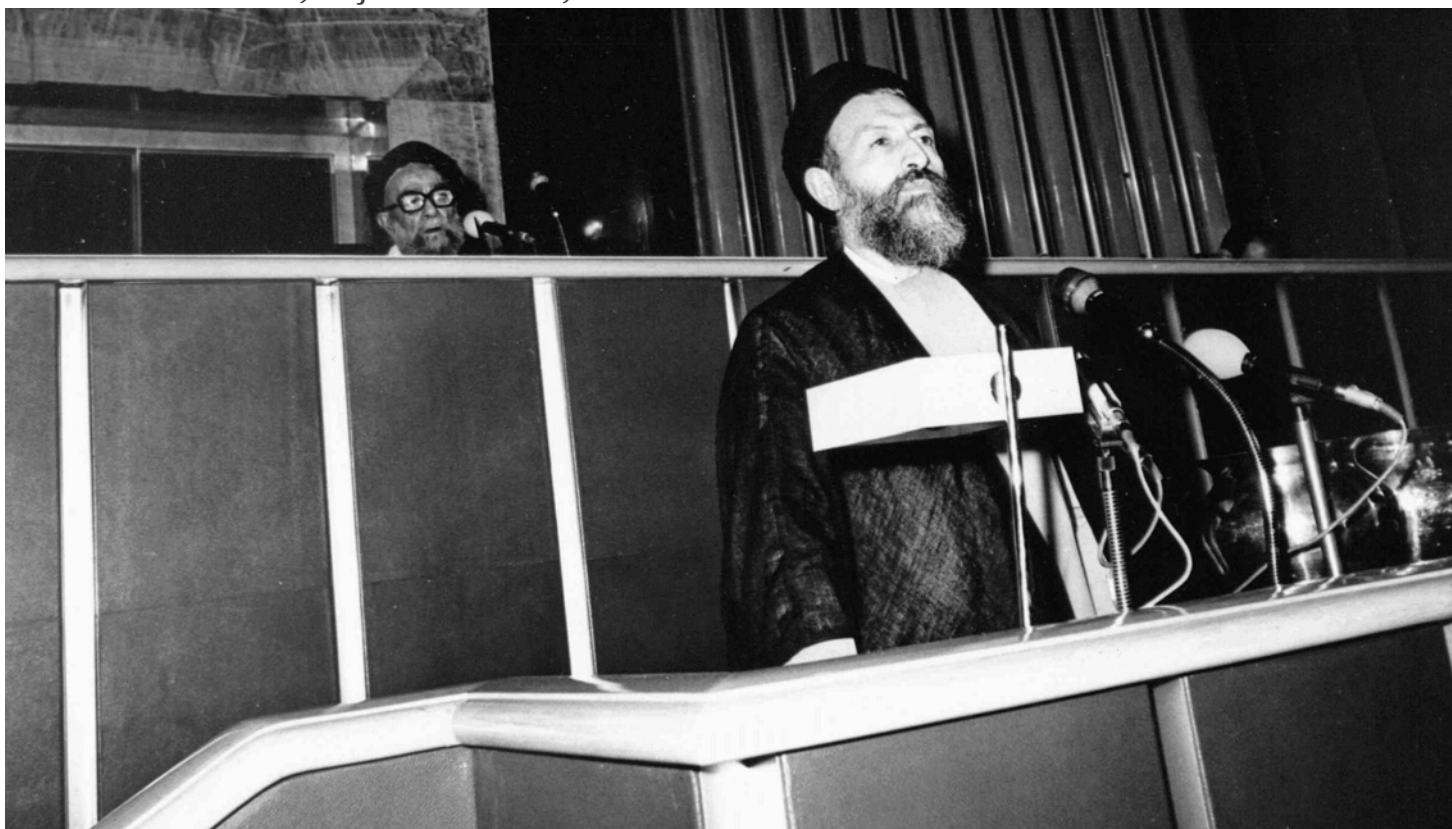
In the circles of the so-called “front-runner organizations of the revolution” there was a belief that the more anti-imperialism slogans are chanted and the sharper and clearer the position is adopted against them, the purer we would be, and the initial “defect” of the revolution reaches “perfection” and according to the Rajavi group, finds “more depth”.

The various forms of anti-American propositions must be interpreted according to the location of the events and the scope of the proposition. For example, the Forqan group mentioned the Guadeloupe Conference in its announcement after the assassination of Martyr Motahhari. The summit of the seven industrialized nations took place in Guadeloupe in January 1979, which Leninist and eclectic groups believe led to the transfer of power from the Shah to the Islamic system. The assassination announcement suggested that the Islamic government and Martyr Motahhari were raised by the same imperialist conference and not by a popular revolution. Anti-imperialist statements are also being used by a terrorist group in a more complex way behind the assassination of Martyr Beheshti and his allies. Beheshti was assassinated only after he was stuck with

the label of “compromising” in a two-year process. The July 7 assassination cannot be analyzed without a special discourse that Rajavi's organization prepared on the sidelines of the seizure of the US embassy.

Foucault said that there is always “little thought” in the most heinous human crime, and that thought must be pulled out of its hole and hideout in the analysis of the crime. The assassination of Beheshti was planned with an extremely evil calculation. Analyzing the consequences of the assassination, Rajavi later said, “It

person who could take the Islamic system of Iran from the critical period and the challenges of the early days of the revolution to the stage of stabilization and thus ensure the stability of the system through adaptation to the requirements of the modern government. According to the mentioned analysis, any attempt by the system to advance reforms and adaptation to the modern world requires a “transformation” and “reform” which only Beheshti could tackle. In this view, continuous reconstruction and reform,



Ayatollah Beheshti's speech at the opening ceremony of the first term of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, July 14, 1983

should be noted that the regime minus Beheshti has no chance of transformation and reconstruction.”

In order to arrive at a clear understanding of the reason behind the assassination of martyr Beheshti, the concept of “transformation” and “reconstruction” should be considered in the Rajavi's context. From the viewpoint of Rajavi's organization, Beheshti was the only

which in our time is a condition for the survival of any modern system, could not be compatible with the ruling Islamic system except on the condition of “transformation” and change in the nature of the system. A challenge which, in the eyes of the terrorists, could only be dealt with by Beheshti. Hence, the bomb that was planted in the Islamic Republic Party headquarters on that

ominous night had no purpose other than to detonate the “reconstruction of the structure of the Islamic Republic”. The assassination of Beheshti was, in Rajavi's view, assassination of reform and reconstruction of the system during the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

Reconstruction and reform were not only endogenous in Rajavi's view but also had an imperialist aspect. According to the organization's written analysis of the nature of the Islamic Revolution, the victory of the revolution was due to a kind of “imperialist compromise” to deter the “real revolutionaries” from coming to power. According to the organization, Beheshti was the main architect of the transition and unarmed overthrow of the Shah's regime. A transition that, according to the analysis of Mojahedin, would not have been possible without a “compromise” with America. This “compromise” claimed by Rajavi facilitated and accelerated the victory of the revolution and thus marginalized the armed struggle and “front-runner” organizations:

“When people were shouting, 'Arm our leaders,' compromising and conservative leaders were dwelling on ensuring the victory of the revolution without spilling blood.”

Reading the MEK's fall 1979 analysis in prison which was later published by Rajavi's organization shows that that the label of “compromise” was devised in the form of discourse from the very beginning of the victory of the revolution and even during the height of the anti-monarchy demonstrations to

exclude a rival. Each revolution achieves sovereignty according to the methods and tactics of its own leaders. In Rajavi's view, the unarmed nature of the Islamic Revolution paved the way for the rule of those who were not “professional revolutionaries” and established sovereignty only by compromising with America over “curbing the anger of the masses” and preventing the “deepening of the revolution” and its promotion to an armed struggle:

“Those who saw the depth and spread of this movement as contradictory to their own existence tried to limit and control it. There was also an overwhelming fear of the depth and spread of this movement in the United States.”

According to the Mojahed magazine, victory of Islamic Revolution was indebted to a common concern of the revolution's leaders and America on deterring the revolution's “depth” and “spread” and armed struggle. If it happened, could provide an opportunity for the hegemony and sovereignty of the “professional revolutionaries” and the marginalization of the “compromising” revolutionaries.

“Given all these missed opportunities for the revolution to be armed, the seizure of the US embassy seemed to provide a new opportunity to ‘deepen’ the revolution. Hence, given the result of the Islamic Revolution, we should be alert not to repeat the ‘compromise strategy.’” The goal of the Rajavi's organization, and even the Tudeh Party, was to incite America to a military intervention over the seizure of its embassy. Considering

“Beheshti was assassinated only after he was stuck with the label of “compromising” in a two-year process.

”

Rajavi's organization's approach to America in the mentioned period, one can achieve a clearer understanding of the tactics aimed at exacerbating the crisis:

“Making any military intervention by the world-devouring countries requires some factors and preconditions. For this reason, the US Marines' invasion of Iran could not have taken place without relying on the extensive spy bases and networks

the intensification of the anti-imperialist struggle.”

Rajavi felt that “inciting the anti-imperialist struggle,” that is, dragging the United States into military intervention, would create another kind of revolutionary situation that was qualitatively different from the first revolution, i.e., the Islamic Revolution: Once again former leaders who were masters of tackling crisis



An Anti-American Rally by the MeK. The Slogan on the banner reads that: “We make Iran another Vietnam.”

organized by CIA agents and remnants of SAVAK ...”

“He [Kissinger] dreams of subsiding the anti-imperialist wave, and that is why he is uniting with Carter. The policy of the imperialists in this period is “stagnation”. As a result, Carter, in a message, urges the Americans to exercise great restraint! Clearly, this restraint is not in fact to save the lives of the hostages but to prevent

through unarmed way could not assure victory, and the “Vietnamese” model of struggle against America will replace the unarmed struggle. Such a situation, the Vietnameseization of the revolution, could naturally oust the existing leaders. In this situation, if America does not intervene directly, then we should see on whom it relies in the system:

“But Kissinger's comment is more interesting than anything else. He says,

“We’d rather calm down and support anyone who is in charge in the country and then try to find what makes foreign leaders to treat America that way.” The depth of mercenary politics of imperialism is revealed by delving into Kissinger’s remarks ... Who is really his hope?”

America’s armed intervention could have created a more complex situation that could only be solved by an organization that is “the most sophisticated front-runner organization”, so the ruling party that lacks this complexity could easily be removed from the scene in a medium-term process:

“Do we also think that in today’s complex international context, it is easy to fight such imperialists? Is it easy to lead the struggle? So, we continue the question: “What are the characteristics of those forces that want to come to the end? How do you formulate your relationship with different forces and groups as regards the unity and conflict?”

Therefore, Rajavi tried to exploit the seizure of the embassy. “Mojahedin” magazine wrote in January 1980:

“As a representative of the generation that fertilized the tree of revolution, I should explicitly warn all individuals and officials in every position who want to let the world-devourers to the country that if they do not believe in the divine courts of the Hereafter, lest they forget the roaring and relentless courts of the people. I explicitly note that as long as there is a MEK member in our country, America must not and will not be able to return to

this country.”

The anti-American discourse was directed at martyr Beheshti. An in-depth examination of Rajavi’s anti-American sentiments in that period

reveals how Rajavi’s organization’s taking of extreme positions against America was significantly concurrent with their division with the ruling system which had been risen from the Islamic Revolution.

For Rajavi, the capture of the embassy and the rise of anti-American sentiment had created an opportunity that was lost during the height of the

Islamic Revolution and the overthrow of the Shah’s regime. The analysis of the Rajavi’s Organization in the first days after the revolution was that the speed of the victory of the revolution had prevented the “deepening” of the revolution to the stage of a “real” revolution in its armed, bloody, and long-term concept. For this reason, the government that emerged from the unarmed revolution (and therefore not “deep”) could not be considered a truly “revolutionary” and truly “anti-imperialist” government in the eyes of the MEK. Even in those days, the organization’s inner circles believed that if Bakhtiar had resisted for a few months, there would have been an opportunity for the “real revolutionaries” to lead the revolution. Now, at the time of the capture of the US embassy, the missed opportunity seemed to be repeated in another way:

“Another issue that hinders an anti-

“According to the organization, the victory of the revolution was due to a kind of “imperialist compromise” to deter the “real revolutionaries” from coming to power.”

imperialist tactic is the reactionary [government's] fear of a mass expansion of this tactic. That is, the reactionary currents who have not been able to participate in a long-time anti-imperialist struggle, do not want the deepening of the movements and their mass expansion and hence hold them back."

Who has stamped on the 'deepening' and 'mass expansion' of anti-American movements? Rajavi refers to an 'internal compromise faction' acting in a covert alliance with America:

"They are trying to swerve the struggle and secure the imperialism bases, on which they feed, from the rage of people. Another group will join these traitors. Those who cannot endure the struggle. Those who would be separated from people if the previous stage lasted a bit

longer."

This analysis of Rajavi gives a broad concept of "American bases". In this analysis, the American embassy is the apparent base of America, behind which innumerable "hidden bases" had been working. According to this analysis, the struggle against America should not have been limited to the seizure of the embassy, but the movement should have been extended to the stage of capturing all other bases.

The "internal American base" in the aforementioned analysis was a metaphor for the removal of an Islamic government that in its sharpest form was directed against Beheshti:

"Those who cannot endure the struggle. Those who would be separated from people



Cherik'hay'e
Fadaei'e
Khalq's and
Mojahedin-e
Khalq's
assault on the
US embassy in
Tehran

if the previous stage lasted a bit longer... Those who owe the non-disclosure of their opportunistic nature to the speed of the first stage of the revolution. Yes, they are naturally concerned and opposed to the escalation of the anti-American struggle.”

In an editorial in Mojahed No. 105 (January 1, 1981) titled “The Ruling Party or the Party Sovereignty” and in another piece on Mojahed No. 106 (February 1, 1981) titled “Mr. Beheshti Coming the Raw Prawn”, Rajavi’s organization claims that Beheshti and the Islamic Republic Party worked in collusion with America. Mojahed No. 107 (January 27, 1981) explicitly refers to this issue under the title “Anti-Imperialist Claims for the Release of Hostages” and in issue 109 (February 12, 1981) an editorial entitled “Republic Party, the Baton Movement” and another article titled “Mr.

Beheshti, an Expert in Dealing with the Great Satan,” are the same trick to portray martyr Beheshti as pro-American. At this point, ‘It’s America’s Turn after the Shah’ can be considered a proposition in various applications. Moving this proposition from one camp to another also changes its meaning and theme. The portrayal of Beheshti and Bahonar as pro-Americans also included their scientific activities as authors of the textbooks of ‘religious teachings’:

“Some seized power in the name of Islam as groups, factions, and parties. They had been living in Their luxurious houses or compiling “religious teachings “textbooks for the Shah’s tyrant regime or they had been traveling in Europe during all those years of oppression and terror.”

Here, the general concept of “American base” helps portray the opponent as pro-American:

“It is important to keep in mind that the American embassy is not the only way of imperialism’s infiltration. Every affiliated institution in our society can be a way for infiltration.”

According to this perception of America and the American “base”, the whole society can be considered as a “big embassy” of America. In this particular context of the usage of the slogan “It’s America’s turn after the Shah”, America is no longer the well-known political entity that can be identified in the body of the USA and its institutions and embassies, but it becomes an exceedingly large basket for removing and discarding whatever we hate:

“Despite the tyrants has received a blow... institutions that are linked to imperialism remained almost intact. Now that



imperialism has been thrown out, the thousand-faced actor decided to enter through the window. Which window? The economic, military, and cultural institutions that have been remained open [to America].”

In this broad sense, the “American base” represents the whole society and the institutions in the form of an open window to American infiltration. In those days, the accusation of “monopoly” was fairly frequent, which was directed against martyr Beheshti in its sharpest form. During a direct debate with leaders of the student branch of MEK, Beheshti once explained the constitutional origins of his post as the head of the Supreme Court. However, his debater showed that he does not basically believe in the constitution and the elections. When the Mujahedin-e Khalq spoke of “revolution” and “professional revolutionaries” they meant the same concept of revolution that was enshrined in the constitution and put to the vote. In their viewpoint, Iranian society was more “polytheistic” than it was qualified to vote because it was fundamentally open to the American and capitalist system’s infiltration. For this reason, the representative of Rajavi’s organization criticized Beheshti by condemning elections and the society that had voted for the Islamic government after the revolution:

“They have chosen us because of the atmosphere created during the revolution. What were the criteria of the masses who had risen? All of them had certain leaders. What happens to them when you do not allow the leaders to be

“In Rajavi's analysis, the struggle against America should not have been limited to the seizure of the embassy, but the movement should have been extended to the stage of capturing all other bases.”

part of the leadership? Day by day, the contradictions have been intensified. If dealt with properly, they would not be in this position. Due to the monopolistic and reactionary nature of the active forces during the revolution, who were not honest with the people, they did not want to solve problems for the people. After one year, society has divided into several axes

due to anti-monotheistic polytheistic traits. This reason also goes back to the essence of the same society. Due to the monopolistic nature of those people who have been in the leadership cadre. This is quite clear to us. This is the dialectic of society. And such it has been since the beginning. [Imam] Ali's time and now is not strange for us.”

In those days, all the words of the MEK in criticizing the elections were fed by a dichotomy between “revolutionary institutions” and “elected institutions”. In the aforementioned sense, the revolution acquired its identity through pre-election institutions and “revolutionary organizations” and elections were not the matter at hand. According to their viewpoint, society should first achieve purity after a decades-long process called “monotheistic” purity by Rajavi. Then at the unknown end of this process, society should be able to gain electoral qualifications. When it was first decided to hold elections, Mojahed magazine suggested a kind of formula described as “first cleansing the society of polytheistic traits, then the election”:

“In our opinion, we do not need founders and a new constitution until the end

of the success of the next stage of the revolution, that is, until the eradication of all traces of imperial oppression and colonial dependencies at all levels of the military, political, economic, cultural, etc. Colonial-dependent bases cannot decide on the basic principles of governing the people.”

Therefore, the accusation of monopoly in the mentioned debate should be understood along with this recent Rajavi analysis: Beheshti's debater in Sharif University of Technology's debate intended to say that Beheshti and others like him want to explain their legitimacy according to the constitutional position of their foundation and election. In the final analysis, a society is “polytheistic”, “not cleansed” and “not permeated”, and therefore cannot be considered a “people's” force in the sense defined by professional revolutionaries. In this particular definition, the people are fundamentally different from the masses: the people are defined not by the ballot box but by a revolutionary party and organization.

The conflict was hidden in the form of “deepening” and “completing” the revolution in those days.

I believe that terrorism and violence have never existed in the heart and context of the pure Islamic Revolution. Look at the numerous meetings and recitations of Nahj al-Balaghah by Hussein Rouhani and Abu Turab Haqshenas in Najaf with Imam Khomeini. In the end, they did not emphasize any statements. In my opinion, terrorism and violence promoted in the 1980s can still be seen today in terms of their impact on Iran's super-society. One of the most important effects of the violence explained by professional

revolutionaries was the deepening of the formation of civil society with refreshing political groups.

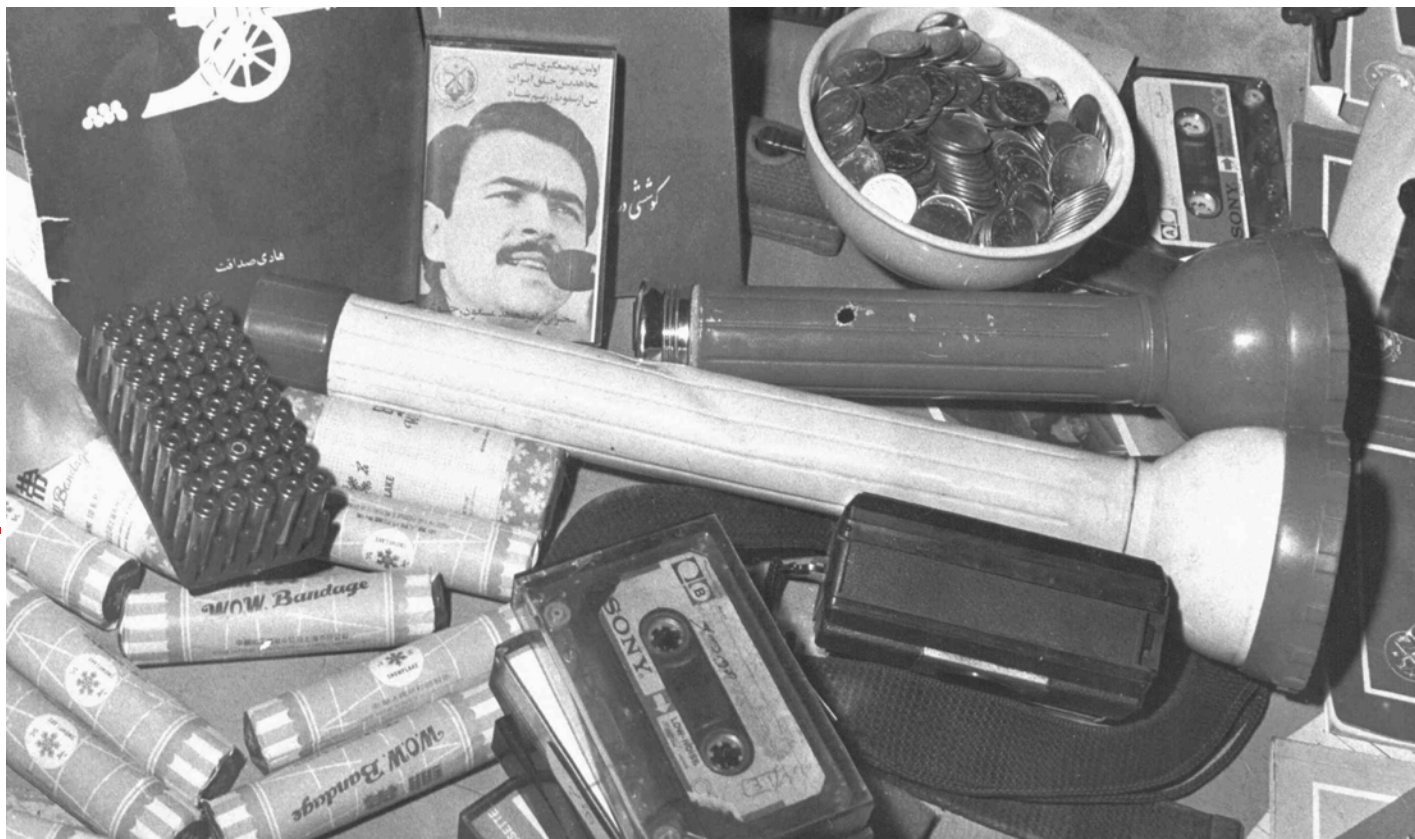
In this article, I do not intend to say that violence has an effect on disrupting and delaying the formation of democracy and republic. Finding the roots of how violence is formed in Iran shows that returning to the original concepts of the Islamic Revolution, a revolutionary movement based on the movement of the masses, reasoning and informing is a way that elites and influential elements in the private and public sectors must explain and follow.

Source: Ramze Obour Magazine, 21 st issue

When did the Violence Begin?

An Overview of MeK's Terrorist Attacks in Iran Before June 20, 1981

Objects and weapons seized from a MeK's safe house



For many years, it has been asserted in literatures about the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MeK) that this terrorist group turned to violence on June 20, 1981. This proposition provokes the popular delusion about Mojahedin that they initially intended to accompany the Islamic Revolution, or at least believed in political struggle and peaceful behavior; but since the government did not meet their conditions, they were pushed into an armed phase.

A brief review of historical documents implies that the MeK has been preparing to confront the nascent Islamic government since the first days of the

victory of Revolution. As numerous cases of violent acts, armed clashes and rallies, and stockpiling weapons have been reported from it in the mentioned period. Military training of cadres and supporters has also been a constant program of the MeK's team houses at this time; So much so that in some documents and memoirs of detached or arrested members of this group, the issue of sending troops to foreign countries to learn methods of destruction, civil war and guerrilla warfare have been recorded.

In this article, we intend to review some aspects of the MeK's crimes between April 1979 (Spring of 1358 in Persian

Calendar) and the August 1981 (summer of 1360 in Persian Calendar). According to historical documents, the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization killed one person and injured dozens in at least three armed clashes in the cities of Abadan, Karaj, and Tehran in April and July 1979 (Farvardin and Tir 1358 in Persian Calendar) [1]. In addition, during 1979, at least three weapons and ammunition depots were discovered in the cities of Tehran and Ghaemshahr belonging to this group, in which large quantities of weapons and tear gas were stored [2].

The MeK's armed conflicts continued scatteredly during 1980 and 1981 in the cities of Mashhad, Tehran, Baneh, and Khorramabad [3]. Most importantly, the group killed two women, 35 and 18 years old, and wounded several others in Khorramabad on January 29, 1981. Then, they attacked the Hezbollah Cultural Center in Khorramabad and set it on fire [4].

Another MeK's crime in 1980 was military training of cadres and supporters, a sample of which was discovered on August 13, 1980 in Sari. During one operation, a number of pro-MeK girls were arrested while gaining military training at one member's house [5].

Another case that is found in the historical documents of 1981, is about detection of a safe house owned by the MeK in Abadan on November 6, 1980. From this house, thirty weapons, one stolen radio belonging to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, as well as diving suits were recovered. Also, in the safe house extensive information about the Islamic Republic Army was gathered. This information included a map of the armed forces' base of heavy weapons and a marked map of all war zones [6].

Armed clashes and military training of members and supporters continued in the first months of 1981 and before June 20, 1981 (30 Khordad 1363 in Persian Calendar). On April 25, 1981, a taxi driver named Mehdi Mansouri was killed by the MeK on Nahid Street in Tehran [7]. Khalil Ojaghizadeh was killed with a shotgun on April 27, 1981, during the MeK's street fighting in Pich-e Shemiran. The point

is that the Mojahedin has included the killed person in "The List of Mojahedin-e Khalq Martyrs" in No. 118 of Mojahed Magazine, the group's main press organ during early years of the 80s. The intelligence of the Kurdistan Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) announced in a report on May 10, 1981 that the MeK had trained its members methods of assassination, bank robbery and facility explosion and blowing up vital facilities in several safe houses in Sanandaj [8].

What mentioned above is only a part of the MeK's crimes between 1979 and 1981, which show that from the first months of the formation of the Islamic Republic, this terrorist group has been engaged in stockpiling weapons and ammunition, military training of forces, and in many cases, assassinations and armed clashes. These documents rightly reflect the fact that the MeK, contrary to its claims, sought to set ground for a military confrontation with the new government with the ultimate goal of overthrowing it.

Sources:

- 1- Ayandegan, April 18, 1979, p. 3; Ettelaat, July 21, 1979, p. 3; Jomhuri-e Eslami, July 5, 1979, p.3
- 2- Jomhuri-e Eslami, August 14, 1979, p.2, and August 18, 1979, p.1; Ettelaat, March 4, 1980, p. 8
- 3- Enghelab-e Eslami, April 22, 1980, p. 3; Mojahed, June 17, 1980, p. 1; Keyhan, February 18, 1981, p.4
- 4- Jomhuri-e Eslami, February 2, 1981, p.5
- 5- Keyhan, August 14, 1980, p.2
- 6- Jomhuri-e Eslami, August 14, 1980, p.2
- 7- Encyclopedia of Terror Martyrs
- 8- Mojahedathay-e Khamoosh, Volume 4 Page 634

June 20, 1981

Map of Tehran



18:30

As the result of a clash between the MeK's supporters and groups of people, about **20** individuals were arrested by the Revolutionary Guards.



18:45

Two private motorcycles in Karim K Zand Street were set to fire by the MeK members. About 30 people were injured and one was killed in the clashes.



23:30

More than 100 injured people went to Firoozgar, Omid Jorjani, Amir Alam, Imam Khomeini, Sina, Emdad and Jam hospitals mostly for ambulatory care, fifteen of whom were hospitalized due to gunshot wounds.

Incident Report

Failed to gain acceptance and popularity among Iranian nation after the Islamic Revolution, MeK terrorist group resorted to terror strategy and announced officially an armed conflict with the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the nation on 20 June, 1981.

On the afternoon of June 20, 1981, while the political inadequacy of President Bani Sadr was being examined in the Parliament, the militia which was equipped with knives, cutters, brass knuckles, Molotov cocktails, acid sprays and firearms (only for group heads and main cadres), organized demonstrations on streets of Tehran to revolt against the ruling government. Simultaneously with the movements in Tehran, similar sporadic clashes took place on a smaller scale in several cities such as Isfahan, Hamedan, Urmia, Shiraz, Ahvaz, Arak, Zahedan, Masjed Soleyman, Bandar Abbas and Mashhad, during which dozens were injured and several were murdered (IRIB Website.)

Masoud Rajavi had promised his supporters to capture all Police stations in a few hours. However, the attacks came to failure in the early evening. Rajavi fled the country in a few weeks and the whole organization moved abroad as a result. This was the biggest failure for an organization that assumed 40% of Iranian army and 50% of the people as its supporters.

17:00

The MeK members slaughtered a 21-year-old boy with bullet, cutlass and awl. After stealing his ID card, the MeK terrorists included the killed person in "The List of Mojahedin-e Khalq Martyrs."



16:00

Nine people, including two policemen, were injured and one was killed in clashes on Vali-e-Asr Street. The MeK members had thrown nails in the street to prevent passing of cars.



81 Riot

Riot Regions

Important Incidents

Streets under Attacks

Parts of Taleghani, Vali Asr, Gisha, and Karim Khan Zand streets

Rebel Groups

MeK, Peykar, Fadaiyan-e-Khalq

Number of Victims

25

Number of the Wounded

116

Number of Set on Fire Buses

4

Number of Destroyed Cars

22

Number of Damaged Buildings

18



17:15

The MeK members slaughtered an IRGC officer in his car using a box cutter.

17:30

MeK members who were hiding in a 50-60 safe house on Iranshahr Street, were arrested by the Police after a few hours of clash.



18:00

A minibus and a fuel tank were set on fire by protesters chanting in favor of Banisadr in Ferdowsi Square.



16:15

A minibus belonging to the National Industrial Organization of Iran was set on fire by the MeK members on Taleghani Street.



17:45

The MeK members attacked a minibus carrying women and injured a number of them.



Sources

Jomhuri-e Eslami, June 22, 1981, p.4 p.8; Jomhuri-e Eslami, June 23, 1981, p.5; Ettelaat, June 21, 1981, p.2; Ettelaat, June 23, 1981, p.2; Khorasan, June 22, 1981, p.1; Khorasan, June 23, 1981, p.2; History Calendar of Holy Defense, Vol. 10, P. 512 P. 553 P. 554; June 20, 1981: A Response to the Necessity of History or the Manifestation of Violence, P. 151; Cherik'haye Fadaei'e Khalq, Vol. 02, P. 210; Encyclopedia of Names of Iranian Martyrs Vol. 15, P. 216; Encyclopedia of Names of Iranian Martyrs Vol. 40, P. 338; Encyclopedia of Names of Iranian Martyrs Vol. 41, P. 1392 P. 1439; Encyclopedia of Iranian Terror Victims; Habilian website; website of Political Studies and Research Institute; Gozarestan Electronic Magazine; Contemporary Political History of Iran Electronic Magazine

Rain of Blood

A Review of the MeK Terrorist Attacks in the Summer of 1981

As the condition on the front line of the war with Iraq worsened and simultaneously with the political crisis that led to the ouster of the first president of Iran Abolhassan Banisadr, the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) which thought that the Islamic Republic is in a weak position, turned the summer of 1981 into a bloody season for Iranian people.

According to the Holy Defense Research & Document Center, the summer of 1981 (1360 in Persian calendar) is one of the most crucial periods in the history of Iran. The country, which was previously embroiled in a crisis of separatist groups and foreign aggression, also encountered widespread terrorist activities and a civil war aiming at overthrowing the young revolutionary government. As a result of this campaign, not only the country officials, but also ordinary people were targeted and blindly murdered.

In this regard, the Holy Defense Research & Document Center writes: "This new crisis was so severe that it could not only overthrow the Islamic Republic, but also endanger the existence of a country called Iran, given the fact that some parts of Iran were already occupied by the foreign enemy and weakening of the

central power would lead to stabilization of the occupation and as well as emboldening of the aggressor to advance further. If it were not for the leadership of Imam Khomeini and the support and resistance of people, the machinators would have accomplished their goals." In the following, we will discuss the most important terrorist activities which occurred during the summer of 1981.

The Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) led by Massoud Rajavi, in coordination with the intelligence services of other countries such as Iraq and France and with the assumption that the Islamic Republic was in a vulnerable position due to the status of the front line and the political crisis which led to the ouster of the then president, turned the summer of 1981 into a bloody season for Iranian people.

The MEK, which had been dreaming of gaining full power in Iran from the beginning of the Islamic revolution victory, activated its cadres who had infiltrated various institutions and organizations along with its assassination teams organized long before in team-houses to strike its final blow at the Iranian government. Given the June 30, 1981 experience, which made them understand



Former Iranian Prime Minister (left) talking with former Iranian Judiciary Chief (right), both assassinated by the MeK in 1981

that ordinary people would anticipate security agencies in confronting MEK elements, the group launched a campaign of terror attacks entitled “cutting regime’s fingers” in which the ordinary people were murdered blindly. The following will cover only a portion of the crimes they committed during this bloody campaign.

Abuzar Mosque Bombing: On June 27, 1981, an element of the MEK named Mohammad Javad Ghadiri, who was the organization’s infiltrator in the Revolutionary Committee based in the Second Bureau of the Army Headquarters, made an assassination attempt on Ayatollah Khamenei, the then Friday prayer Imam of Tehran and Supreme Leader’s representative in the defense commission of the parliament, by planting a bomb concealed in a tape recorder on the mosque lectern. Ayatollah Khamenei was

permanently injured, losing the function of his right wrist.

Bombing in the Islamic Republic Party Headquarters: On June 28, 1981, in the joint meeting of representatives and executive officials of the party with Ayatollah Beheshti, President of the Supreme Court and Secretary General of the party, a bomb detonated and led to the martyrdom of Ayatollah Beheshti and about 72 people present in the meeting 27 of whom were members of the parliament, 4 were ministers and a few deputy ministers. In addition, almost 30 people were injured. Responsible for the explosion was Mohammad Reza Kolahi, an influential member of the organization (MEK) and an infiltrator in the party who had left the meeting before the explosion with an excuse. The parliament speaker, Mr. Hashemi, was also scheduled to attend

the meeting but had to go to hospital to investigate Ayatollah Khamenei's condition. After the martyrdom of Ayatollah Beheshti, Ayatollah Mousavi Ardabili, the Attorney General at the time, was appointed by Imam Khomeini as the head of the Supreme Court on June 29. Also, on the same day, Imam appointed Ayatollah Rabbani Amlishi as replacement for Ayatollah Mousavi Ardabili.

Prime Minister's Office Bombing: On August 30, Massoud Kashmiri, the organization's infiltrator in the Prime Minister's office, participated in a meeting with President Mohammad Ali Rajaei and Prime Minister Mohammad Javad Bahonar as the secretary of the Security Council. He placed the suitcase containing the bomb under the table below Mr. Rajaei and Mr. Bahonar's feet and then left the meeting with an excuse. The bomb was designed in a way that it burned Rajai and Bahonar's bodies and after the explosion, they could only be identified through their teeth.

Col. Houshang Vahid Dastjerdi, head of Shahr bani (police force), was also martyred in this explosion after suffering injuries for several days. At first, it was thought that Massoud Kashmiri, the secretary of the meeting, had also been killed but two days later it came to light that he was the perpetrator of the bombing. The MEK's office in London initially issued a statement through a French news agency claiming responsibility for the blast, but was immediately denied by Rajavi due to the potential international consequences. It is worth mentioning that according to the available evidence, the suitcase containing the bomb was supposed to be planted in the meeting of heads of departments with Imam Khomeini,



but because the guards did not permit Kashmiri, who was with Rajaei, to carry the suitcase with him to Imam's house, that plot was neutralized. The horror of being exposed made Kashmiri leave that place furiously.

After martyrdom of the President and the Prime Minister, the temporary presidential council was formed on August 31, and on September 1, it introduced Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani as the Prime Minister. The parliament also voted for him on September 2. On the same day, he introduced to the parliament the members of the cabinet who, except for the Minister of Roads and Transportation and the Minister of Interior, were the same as Dr. Bahonar's cabinet and the



A city bus set on fire by the MeK, September 17, 1981

parliament voted in favor of the cabinet on September 3.

Prosecutor's Office Bombing: On September 5, 1981, due to the explosion of a bomb planted on the ceiling of the lower floor by Mahmoud Fakharzadeh Kermani, a group's infiltrator in the Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office, Ayatollah Qudusi was martyred. The MEK, in issue 236 of the "Mojahed Magazine", officially claimed responsibility for the assassination. After this incident, the Supreme Judicial Council appointed Hojjatoleslam Mousavi Tabrizi as the Attorney General.

Tabriz Friday Prayers Bombing: On September 11, 1981, Majid Nikoo, a member of the organization (MEK), approached Ayatollah Madani, the Friday

Imam of Tabriz, after the end of the Friday prayer sermons. While he was getting prepared for the prayers, Majid Nikoo took his hand and pulled Ayatollah Madani towards himself despite the guards' obstruction and detonated two of his grenades simultaneously leading to the martyrdom of Ayatollah Madani and 6 worshipers along with injuring 38 other. After this incident, Ayatollah Meshkini was appointed as the temporary Friday Imam of Tabriz.

Other Terror Attacks: Other officials were also assassinated and martyred by the MEK including Hojjatoleslam Beheshtinejad, Deputy Friday Imam of Isfahan; Mohammad Kachuei, director of Evin Prison; Seyed Reza Kamyab,

House of a
MeK' terror
victim,
September 1,
1982



representative of Mashhad; Hassan Ayatollah, representative of Tehran; Hojjatoleslam Khodadadi, representative of Imam Khomeini in Jihad of Construction in Anzali; Ali Ansari, governor of Gilan and his deputy Alireza Nouraei.

Bombing and random murdering: Based on experience, the MEK had learned that as long as people were on the scene and actively supporting the government, the ultimate goal of regime overthrow would never be accomplished. At this point, the organization put the strategy of “cutting regime’s fingers” on agenda and launched a series of attacks on people and bombing in public places as a means of spreading fear among people so that they would no longer obstruct their activities. This thought was rooted in the eclectic doctrine of the Mojahedin. The following includes only a small part of the group’

terror attacks.

Throwing an incendiary bomb into a bus in Shiraz and leading to burning and martyrdom of a two-year-old child; bomb blast in front of the city governor's office; throwing two handmade explosive devices at a house belonging to a businessman in Shahroud; bomb explosion in front of Tamasha cinema on Enghelab Square of Tehran and martyrdom of 9 people; throwing grenades at the Jihad of Construction office in Boroujerd; bomb blast in front of the exit door of Khorramabad 100-bed hospital; bomb explosion in Azadi Square of Kermanshah and martyrdom of 14 people; throwing incendiary bombs inside a plastic shop and a car spare-part shop in Mashhad;

Throwing an incendiary bomb into a

carpet shop in Shiraz; bomb explosion in a glass-cutting shop in Arak; throwing an incendiary bomb at a plastic shop in Neishabour; setting fire to a carpet shop in Shiraz; throwing incendiary bombs into a carpet shop in Sari causing 6 other shops to burn down; throwing incendiary bombs into a sewing shop in Semnan; setting fire to a cloth shop in Taybad; Bomb blast in front of Boroujerd National Bank; setting fire to a container carrying products of the cultural exhibition of Jihad of Construction in Mahshahr knowing that the driver was outside the container saying prayers while her daughter was inside sleeping and therefore causing martyrdom of a 3-year-old girl;

Shooting a Foreign Ministry employee while crossing the street in Tehran; murdering a butcher in his shop in Hamedan; murdering a vegetable seller on Damavand Street of Tehran; shooting a bicycle repairman in front of his shop in Arak; murdering a fruit seller in Mashhad; shooting two cyclists in front of Iran Cinema in Rasht; shooting people in Naseri Mosque in Kermanshah; murdering a worker in Rasht; murdering a shopkeeper in Karaj; murdering a student in Sari murdering a shopkeeper on Enghelab Square of Tehran; shooting people present in city governorship campus in Ghaemshahr; murdering a villager in Babol because he refused to hand over his motorcycle to the MEK members; murdering an old man who had come from Ramhormoz to Mashhad to visit his injured son in a hospital; murdering an employee of National Bank of Iran at a bus station in Tehran; murdering a clergyman in Amol; murdering the owner of a cloth shop and his son in front their shop in Quchan; murdering a shoemaker in Tehran.

Armed Demonstrations: In September of 1981, the MEK announced a plan for “armed and insurgent demonstrations” to its members, assuming that “large-scale bombings, deception operations and assassinations have prepared the ground for people and made them ready to rise up and overthrow the government. Therefore, it is necessary that the vanguard first break the atmosphere of repression so that people can come to the scene.”

One of the MEK’s officials clarified this issue: “We are holding armed demonstrations in crowded areas in order to murder people and motivate them to fight and confront the government”. Accordingly, the group organized several armed demonstrations in different parts of Tehran in the second half of September, which resulted in the death of ordinary people present at the site who had been confronting the group’s elements earlier than the security forces as well as shop and public property vandalism. Seventy members of the MEK were either killed or arrested, and these demonstrations had virtually no effect.

From June 1981 to June 2022

Four Decades of Violent Totalitarianism

MeK's street
clashes and
demonstrations
in 1981



Leftist forces in Iran have always had a radical approach in the contemporary history of the country, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. This approach is primarily rooted in their leaders' belief in armed class struggle and their quest for creation of a Marxist and communist society led by the proletariat.

The Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MeK) is one such group that, from the very beginning, have adopted a militant approach not only against the ruling

government, but also toward the dissident members especially during the internal purge of 1975.

The armed-struggle and violence are so widespread among leftist groups that even the MeK, which had mixed Islam and Marxism, actually continued to use radical Marxist methods in its confrontations. An examination of the group's history over the past four decades clearly demonstrates how the it implemented violence at the service of totalitarianism. Assassination of over 12,000 Iranian people, including

civilians and government officials is the consequence of that approach.

On June 20, 1981, the MeK officially launched its armed struggle against Iranian citizens and the new political system ruling the country. It is worth mentioning that although the MeK officially launched its so called 'armed phase of resistance' on June 20, the group had started its acts of terror and violence long before.

The statements of the MeK leader Massoud Rajavi in summarizing the group's one-year activities after June 20, is an obvious indication of the group's opposition with the ruling political system. According to Rajavi, the MeK thought of June 20 as a type of experiment to reconstruct the pattern of the Shah's fall. Former Iranian Foreign Minister Ebrahim Yazdi, who was a member of the Islamic Consultative Assembly at the time, points out that before the events in June 1981, members of the MeK had told him of their wish to experience a revolution once again. Ezatullah Sahabi, a political activist close to the Freedom Movement, spoke about the MeK in quite the same way. He mentioned how the MeK made its members believe that they were oppressed in order to incite them and set the ground for an armed struggle.

Just as the MeK's resort to violence was not started on June 20, as violence is inseparable from leftist groups, there can be no point for its end. Even in the spring of 2003 when the group was forcibly disarmed in Iraq, the group's inclination towards violence is still ongoing.

According to a document released by United States Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit in 2010, the MeK was engaged in training female members in its former base in Iraq called Camp Ashraf to perform suicide attacks in Karbala. This document shows how, in less than a decade of forced disarmament, this group sought to implement violent methods against their opponents.

By reviewing the MeK's history in the last four decades since the official start of the so-called armed phase of resistance, one could see how the group's adoption of violence has continued in various forms. From the bombing of Qom Railway Hall three days after June 20, 1981 which caused four deaths and fifty injuries, to the assault on the organizers of an exhibition in Stockholm held by Iranian families of terror victims on June 9, 2022, the MeK's violent nature has not changed despite its disarmament and the political gestures of its leaders in the United States and Europe.

Fifteen attacks on gatherings of Iranians living in Europe and North America in 1981 similar to what we saw on June 9 and 10 of 2022, which all led to the injury of dozens of Iranian citizens and diplomats in these countries, is a clear sign of the MeK's totalitarianism and intolerance blended with violence.

By claiming responsibility for nine suicide operations against civilian targets during 1981 and 1982, the MeK can be considered a pioneer of suicide bombings in the Middle East, even before Salafist and fundamentalist

“From the bombing of Qom Railway Hall three days after June 20, 1981, to the assault on the organizers of an exhibition in Stockholm on June 9, 2022, the MeK's violent nature has not changed.”

groups like al-Qaeda. It was in the 1980s that most of Iranian terror victims were assassinated by members of this group in different parts of the country. MEK's mortar attacks even continued during the 1990s in Tehran and border provinces. In an interview with the Al-Musawar newspaper about the MeK's achievements in Iran, Rajavi points to assassination of over 6000 people from June 1981 to the end of 1983 by operational teams of the

acts.

Coordinated attacks on eleven Iranian diplomatic missions in Europe and North America in 1992 which caused the injury of a few employees and diplomats, is an example of violation of international law concerning diplomatic impunity. The case of Iranian embassy in Australia was so unacceptable that the Canberra state, which had failed to protect the embassy, was forced to sentence four of the 18

MeK's attack to an exhibition on their crime in Stockholm, Sweden, June 9, 2022



group.

Relocating to Iraq and siding with the former dictator Saddam Hussein show another aspect of the MEK's violent terror acts. Invading Iran from the Iraqi soil with Saddam's financial and military support July 1988, oppressing the Iraqi people in 1991 and handing over the arrested insurgents to the Iraqi intelligence service are among the MeK's prominent violent

perpetrators to 18 months in prison. Ever since, Australia listed MeK as a terrorist group.

Arrest of Maryam Rajavi in 2003 by the French counterterrorism police shortly after the fall of Saddam Hussein and the financial and logistic support the group received marked another chapter in the inhumane behavior of the MeK. However, this time it was domestic violence.

Upon the arrest of Maryam Rajavi and 160 MeK members at the groups' operational bases in Paris, a number of MeK members took to streets of Paris and some European cities and engaged in self-immolation. This cultish behavior, which frightened hundreds of European citizens, is an example of the group's violent anti-human behavior against the members.

Even after relocating to Albania, the MeK, due to its own terrorist nature, did not

the country in the form of Insurgent Centers on social networks and media and only publish these images in their Persian language media in the hope that their violent and terrorist nature will remain hidden from Western audiences.

Now, with the assault on the exhibition of the families of Iranian victims of terrorism, the true nature of the MeK will be revealed to its Western sponsors. This group could not tolerate a two-day exhibition in front of the Stockholm court building where the Iranian citizen Hamid Nouri is on trial, while it has taken the podium in the 93rd session of his trial by deception and lying.

This is the militant Marxist - Leninists totalitarianism of the MeK in Europe which is never going to change because it is related to their essence.

The MeK today is as totalitarian, violent and repressive as the 1980s. Nothing is going to change.



abandon the use of violence to achieve its goals. To this end, they established the so-called Insurgent Centers and the Fifth Round of the Liberation Army's Founders to carry out terrorist and sabotage actions within Iran. Being aware of the negative consequences of this behavior for their actions in the international arena, the group's leaders refuse to post the pictures of their members holding firearms inside

Death is Our Business

An Overview of the MEK's Raids on Iranians Abroad

An exhibition on documents of the MEK terrorist group's crimes was held in Stockholm, Sweden, on Thursday, June 10, by the families of terror victims in Iran. The exhibition, which contains documents and images of the MEK crimes against Iranian people, was held as a response to the trial of Mr. Hamid Nouri, an Iranian citizen, in a court in Stockholm where members of the infamous MEK terrorist cult were summoned to court by the Swedish judicial system as plaintiffs and witnesses and were given the floor for more than 90 sessions.

The political act of the Swedish judiciary, which is in fact an unjust treatment towards survivors and victims of terrorism, caused these families to obtain necessary legal permits and hold an exhibition on documents of MEK terrorist group's crimes in Stockholm.

The issue met with a hysterical reaction on the MEK's part, in a way that the group called for the cancellation of the exhibition hours before it was supposed to be on view. However, since the permit could not be revoked, the MEK tried to disrupt it through their members.

Attacking the organizers of the exhibition with cold weapon and assaulting the reporter and cameraman of Press TV and chanting slogans against them which

led to the arrest of a few MEK members, tearing down a number of banners, constant television coverage of members trying to disrupt the exhibition are all part of the MEK's drastic actions, which indicate that holding this exhibition has been very unpredictable and unbearable for them.

This terrorist group, which has overtaken all its rivals such as ISIS in committing all sorts of crimes, has been much more ruthless in previous years. The world media archive is full of violent actions of MEK members against any lawful gathering of Iranians in Europe and the United States who have some religious or political orientation towards their compatriots in Iran. Furthermore, all places affiliated with the Islamic republic of Iran in one way or another have always been MEK's targets of attack.

A review of MEK's attacks on rallies of Iranians abroad

June 22, 1981 | Oklahoma, USA:

Elements of the MEK attacked members of the Islamic Association of Students in America severely injured 4 (Ettela'at, June 22, 1981, p. 20).

June 23, 1981 | Hamburg, Germany:

About 20 supporters of the MEK attacked the Iranian consulate in Hamburg and

damaged the office property (Ettela'at, June 22, 1981, p. 20).

July 21, 1981 | Hamburg, Germany:

About 50 members and supporters of the MEK entered a mosque in Hamburg through a window, stole its property and tore a few books and photos in the mosque (Kayhan, July 21, 1981, p. 4).

August 3, 1981 | Berlin, Germany:

Over 130 MEK supporters entered the Iranian embassy and the German police arrested them. However, only 20 were taken into custody and the rest were released (Jomhuri-e Eslami, August 5, 1981, p. 3).

August 4, 1981 | Berlin, Germany:

About 140 students of MEK supporters attacked the Iranian consulate, performed acts of sabotage, and wrote anti-revolution slogans on the embassy walls. The police released 25 embassy employees who were taken hostage. Also, 20 MEK supporters were arrested (Jomhuri-e Eslami, August 5, 1981, p. 3)

August 25, 1981 | Stockholm, Sweden:

MEK members occupied house of the Iranian ambassador to Sweden and took him along with his wife hostage. The police intervened and captured them. Meanwhile, some damage was made to the archive of ambassador's diplomatic



MeK members broke into the Iranian Embassy outside Stockholm on June 26, 2009, injuring one embassy worker

relations (History Calendar of Holy Defense, Vol 13, p. 112).

September 25, 1981 | Bonn, Germany:

MEK supporters attacked the students who were supposed to attend a war ceremony in the university of Mainz and injured 2 people. (Kayhan, November 8, 1981, p. 1)

October 6, 1981 | Italy:

In one of the Italian cities, a conflict flared up between members of Islamic Association of Students and elements of the MEK in which Ghazanfar Khavand, a third-year student of mechanical engineering at university of Turin was murdered (Jomhuri-e Eslami, p2, October 26, 1981; Ettela'at, p1, October 26, 1981; Kayhan, p. 3, October 22, 1981; The Encyclopedia of Names of Martyrs, Vol 21, p. 221; The Encyclopedia of Iranian Terror Victims, Vol 3, p. 93)

November 6, 1981 | California, the USA:

large number of members of different anti-revolution groups attacked the gathering of mourners of Imam Hossein in University of California, Berkeley (Jomhuri-e Eslami, November 10, 1981, p. 2)

November 7, 1981 | Frankfurt, Germany:

100 MEK supporters equipped with batons, iron rods and axes assaulted 20 Iranian Muslim students who were praying in a Technical University located 20 km south of Frankfurt and severely injured 15. No one was arrested by the police (Kayhan, November 8, 1981, p. 1)

November 9, 1981 | Stockholm, Sweden:

40 MEK elements equipped with a variety of cold weapons attacked 3 students

who were supporters of the revolution which led to the injury of all 3 (Kayhan, November 11, 1981, p. 3)

December 25, 1981 | Los Angles, the USA:

Maryam Ghorbanzade, a member of Islamic Association of Students, was murdered by elements of the MEK in her house in Los Angles (Jomhuri-e Eslami, January 14, 1981, p. 2; Ettela'at, December 31, 1981, p. 18; Kayhan, December 27, 1981, p. 1; Websites of Shahidpedia and Society of Devotees of the Islamic Revolution).

January 30, 1982 | Orino, Italy:

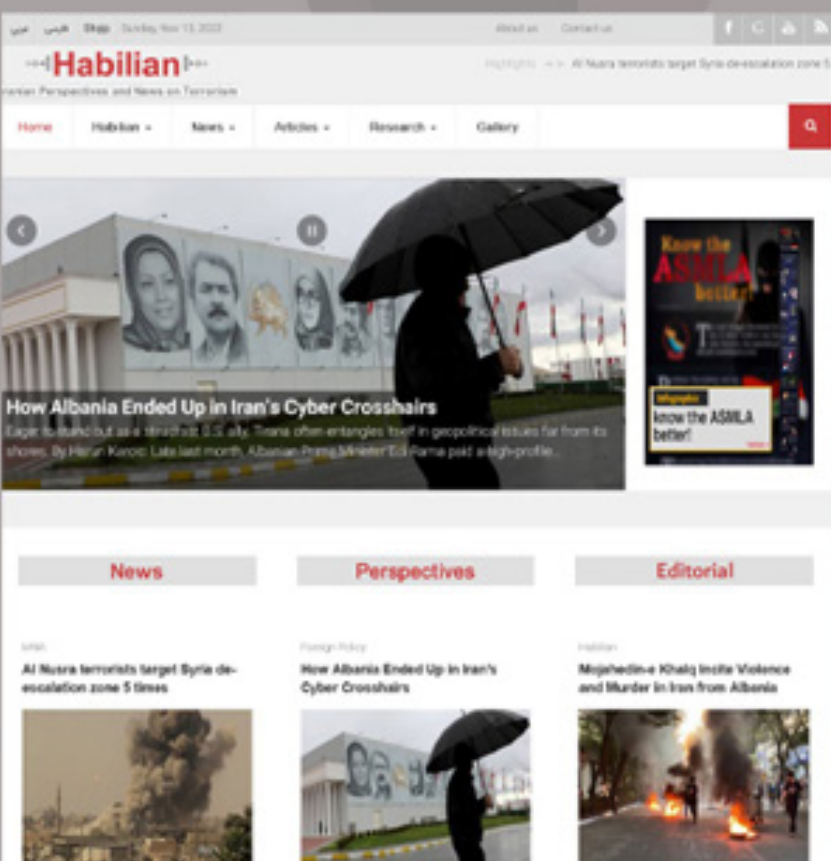
Following a skirmish between MEK elements and members of Islamic Association of Students, 9 were arrested. Also, one unlicensed hunting weapon and a large number of cold weapons were seized by the police (Jomhuri-e Eslami, January 30, 1982, p. 10)

February 9, 1982 | Minnesota, the USA:

The gathering of students to celebrate the third anniversary of the Islamic revolution in Minneapolis was attacked by elements of the MEK (Kayhan, February 10, 1982, p. 32)

March 1, 1982 | Rome, Italy:

At the end of a Du'a Kumayl reciting rite in the location of Islamic Association of Students, a serious conflict occurred between members of the Islamic Association of Students and MEK elements (Ettela'at, March 1, 1982, p. 2)



[www.habilian.ir /en](http://www.habilian.ir/en)

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Former Iranian Spokesman: Tirana is Playing a Dangerous Game by Hosting the MeK

Ramin Mehmanparast is an Iranian diplomat, the former spokesman of the Iranian foreign ministry and the former ambassador to Poland, Lithuania, Thailand, and Kazakhstan. He has direct observations of The Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) from his bachelor days in Sharif University of Technology before the Islamic Revolution through conducting researches on the group's measures in the first years after the revolution to his encounter with its members during his diplomatic missions. In an exclusive interview with Watchlist, Mehmanparast, after describing his encounters with the MeK, discusses the context in which the group was relocated to Albania. According to Mehmanparast, Albania is playing a very dangerous political game by allowing a terrorist group to officially operate against a government in their country and this will lead to adverse consequences for this country.

Habilian: We are so glad to have you Mr. Mehmanparast. As the first question, please tell us about your earliest encounter with the Mojahedin-e Khalq

Organization (MEK).

Mehmanparast: I have known the MEK before the Revolution. During the early 1970s, the organization engaged in different activities. In 1976, I was sixteen and a twelfth-grader living in Narmak¹. I skipped two grades and was younger than my classmates. The year after that I turned sixteen and I was a student at the Sharif University of Technology. At that time, two groups were involved in political activities: the Muslim Students Association and the Muslim Students Organization. The former was affiliated with the MEK and the latter was at loggerheads with the MEK over political matters. Some of the Muslim Students Organization's members became the major members of the Reformist Party after the Revolution. Senior Members of MEK were students at the Sharif University of

Technology. At that time- I doubt whether it was 1978 or 1979- Martyr Beheshti was under pressure by leftist forces. Rumors were going around about some documents on Martyr Beheshti in the Nest of Spies (the former US embassy in Tehran). Malicious gossip was circulating around Beheshti, Hashemi Rafsanjani, and

1- A neighbourhood in north-east Tehran



Khamenei, the three companions of the Revolution.

A three-hour debate was held at the Sharif University of Technology. Reza Seifollahi, Iran's Police Chief between 1992 and 1996, was a student at the university and moderator of the meeting. Mr. Beheshti took part in the debate with two MEK members. I well remember many fellow students were seeking to know the truth about Martyr Beheshti and whether the gossip had some truth. We had front-row seats at the amphitheater for the debate and Maryam Qajar Azodanlu (Rajavi) was sitting some three seats away. She was also a student at the Sharif University of Technology. The discussions began. MEK members crowded into the amphitheater because the group had initiated the debate. They leveled many baseless accusations against Martyr Beheshti. He listened calmly to their words and tried to provide moral answers. He reminded them once or twice that this is not a boxing ring and they have not gathered for altercation.

Martyr Beheshti told the organizers of the meeting that it is impossible to answer all the accusations in such a short time. His behavior was so effective that at the end of the debate, the two debaters hung their heads in shame and he calmed them down. Martyr Beheshti's arguments were so forceful and well-reasoned that convinced all of the students who were initially skeptical of him. They gathered around him and chanted "Beheshti the hero, the hope of the oppressed" while

seeing him to the door. Beheshti and the pro-revolutionaries acquired enormous prestige following the session, while the MEK earned a notorious reputation and fell down the social ladder among the university students. Since then, more discussion sessions were held. We had relatively more information on political parties since the Sharif University of Technology was the center of political discussions. All these events and the Revolution's developments progressed concurrently.

The MEK intended to play a role and cause a rift among the country's officials during the interim government of Bazargan. They called Ayatollah Taleqani "Father Taleqani". They wanted to make him defy Imam Khomeini. The MEK used to organize many conspiracies at that time, particularly before the parliamentary elections. They recruited younger students by entering them to the organization and giving fake tasks to them such as responsibility of a dead-end street. This continued up until Banisadr's presidency

and his increasing conflicts with the Islamic Revolution. He stood against Imam Khomeini, Martyr Beheshti, Hashemi Rafsanjani, and Ayatullah Khamenei. He had serious disagreements with Rajaei's government who was then the Prime Minister. March 5 was the peak of Banisadr's disagreements with the Islamic Revolution. He had called on his supporters to gather at the University of Tehran. MEK members attended and worked for providing security for the

“Most of the MEK's assassinations were carried out randomly. They took the people's lives for no earthly reason. They chose their targets based on their appearance and some people were wrongly murdered.”

rally. A group of revolutionary boys and girls participated in the gathering, which provoked fierce clashes. MEK members pushed them off the wall.

People knew that Banisadr's relationship with the Islamic Revolution had come to the end of the road. MEK had openly taken sides with Banisadr and their position was crystal clear. The events unfolded till the MEK decided to take up arms against the Islamic Republic. Some clashes erupted, where Mousa Khiabani the second-in-command of the MEK, and Ashraf Rabi'ei, Masoud Rajavi's wife, were killed. The MEK changed course in its operations. After that the MeK relocated its members to Iraq following the scape of Banisadr and Rajavi from Iran, they continued their activities in Camp Ashraf. They still assassinated and tortured pro-revolutionaries in Iran. They had been turned into the forces of the enemy i.e., Saddam's mercenaries. These were my experience with the MEK until I got married.

In March 1982, MEK members assassinated Zeinol'abedin Yaqoubi, the chief executive of Bank Sepah. Martyr Yaqoubi, who had conducted research on Islamic economics, used to hold meetings with Martyr [Sayyed Abdolkarim] Hasheminejad², Martyr [Mohammad Bagher Hosseini] Lavasani³, Mr. [Ali Akbar]

Velayati⁴, and Morteza Nabavi⁵ prior to the Islamic Revolution. Mr. Yaqoubi was sprayed with bullets before his house by Abbas Sahraei, an MEK member who was known to have killed over 50 officials. I had no prior acquaintance with the Yaqoubi family until I prepared a bulletin for officials. There I put the news of Martyr Yaqoubi's assassination. After about 4 months, a mutual friend recommended Martyr Yaqoubi's daughter for marriage. After a few sessions, we got married and then I put myself in their place and knew what they have gone through.

Most of the MEK's assassinations were carried out randomly. They took the people's lives for no earthly reason. We knew some shopkeepers who were assassinated only because of their love for the Revolution and figures like Martyr Beheshti, Martyr Hasheminejad, and Ayatollah Khamenei. They chose their targets based on their appearance and some people were wrongly murdered. During the Cultural Revolution, when universities ceased operating, I was a teacher in a school near Towhid Square. There were constant assassinations around us. The MEK had increasingly committed more brutal crimes. I

believe that the MEK is the most despised political group in the history of our country.

Habilian: You ran across MEK members in

“ Just a few days before the UN's General Assembly, the MEK were delisted by the US administration despite the fact that this group had assassinated American advisors in Iran before the revolution and they had long been on the US list of terrorist groups. ”

2- The first representative of Mazandaran province during the drafting of the Iranian constitution

3- Representative of the people of Tehran in the first term of the Islamic Consultative Assembly

4- Former Iranian Foreign Minister

5- Former editor-in-chief of Resalat newspaper

New York when you were in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Please tell us about that experience.

Mehmanparast: Yes, I was the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when I attended the United Nations, General Assembly. There, opposition groups are allowed to stage anti-governments' rallies with placards and loudspeakers in particular areas. However, they must not approach the buffer zone implemented outside the United Nations. This incident occurred on the day President Ahmadinejad addressed the General Assembly. We were at the UN General Assembly. MEK protesters were shouting slogans with more passion. Some anti-Syria protesters also joined them. The New York City Police Department announces street closures during the General Assembly. Many streets and side streets take numbers. The large streets start from 1st Avenue, where the UN headquarters is located to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Avenues. Each of them has certain security plans. The 1st Avenue is closed to any vehicular traffic. Only the Presidents, Prime Ministers, and heads of delegations attend the United Nations by heavily protected motorcades. decided to go on foot. We left the buffer zone and passed the MEK protesters, who identified me and started shouting slogans against me. A

few MEK members trespassed their protesting area and attacked us. Gradually, they increased in number. About 100 to 150 protesters gathered around me, hurling insults and shouting slogans. In such situations in Western countries, the first person to use force will be convicted. Being aware of that, they wanted to provoke me to commit assault on them. They insulted me to trigger my reaction and some fifty mobile phones were filming me to use them as documents. I went on my way without having any reaction, so they tried to block my way. They wanted to provoke me to push my way through them. Then they would feign injury by falling on the ground and I would be convicted for aggravated assault. I was not caught in their trap. Then they tried to corner me in a deserted alley without CCTV cameras. They continued such acts for about twenty minutes. The New York Police Department was patrolling the streets but did not stop them.

Habilian: Why the police showed no reaction to the group's acts of sabotage?

Mehmanparast:
Just a few days before the UN's General Assembly, the MEK were delisted by the US government despite the fact that this group had assassinated American advisors in Iran before the revolution and they had long been on the



US list of terrorist groups. We warned the police a few times that MEK members were harassing us and blocking our way but the police showed no reaction. This harassment went on until we noticed a police car on the other side of the street. I opened the door and got in. When the car was surrounded by MEK members, the police pushed them away and started protecting me. I was told to stay in the car until a special bullet-proof car arrived. The security team picked me up and took me to the hotel. A few minutes later, the New York Police Chief came to the hotel and apologized to me. I said to him, "You are supposed to guarantee the security of guests. Your colleagues saw that MEK members attacked me, but did nothing." He just apologized and told me that I had the right to complain if I wanted. The complaint may have led nowhere. We just wanted to make known to everyone how the MEK acted and the fact that the New York police supported them. Luckily,

I reacted in way that no one could take advantage of my behavior. The MEK's obscenities and mistreatments on the one hand, and our polite manners on the other, became a winning card for the Iranian delegation. On the following day, all American media outlets published photos of their attack questioning the American government for not providing security for us. One of the Iranian opposition TV channels aired the next day and sharply criticized the MEK, saying: "Mr. Mehmanparast was the spokesman of the Iranian secretary of foreign affairs and you saw how respectfully he reacted. But you committed savageries and people of Iran will judge you and question your claim of being able to rule Iran". This was very much to their detriment. So, this was our memory with the MEK.

Habilian: Apart from the violent encounter the MEK had with you in New York, were you confronted by them



President Donald Trump's attorney and former New York mayor, Rudy Giuliani addresses a rally organized by the MEK, in Warsaw, Poland, Feb. 13, 2019 (AP photo by Czarek Sokolowski)



MeK members broke into the Iranian Embassy outside Stockholm on June 26, 2009, injuring one embassy worker

during your travels to different countries during your diplomatic mission?

Mehmanparast: They may act differently in different countries. For example, in Brussels where headquarters of the European Union is located, they harass and insult the Iranian delegation and disturb assemblies. In some of our trips with other officials when I was the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I witnessed such scenes but not during the time I worked as an ambassador in different countries. At those times, the Foreign Ministry of the country notified us in advance that an Iranian opposition group was going to protest. They would mention the time of protest along with the number of protesters and the police was responsible for guaranteeing the security. Once when I was in Poland, I was told that a group of twenty was going to protest at a specific time. They were supposed to stand at a distance from the embassy and express their opposition by holding posters and placards for two hours. The protest took only half an hour with twelve

people none of whom was Iranian. They got bored and left the place and nobody welcomed them.

Habilian: The MeK relocated from Iraq to Albaina in 2016 following the United States' official request. what motivated the US to choose Albania, and why did this country shelter them?

Mehmanparast: The MEK felt that they had no safe haven in Iraq and that the Iraqi people and government were opposing their presence in this country. In addition, they suffered great damage and casualties in camp Ashraf. The US decided to relocate the MEK; however, no country was willing to shelter them. If they were a safe political party with a vision for the future, other countries would welcome them and think of it as a kind of investment. Think about the time when Saddam was ruling Iraq and many political figures opposing his regime took refuge in Iran. Well, they were happy to be with us and they were safe, and we helped them for humanitarian purposes.

We turned Iran into a safe haven for the displaced people. When a democratic government came to power in Iraq, these people took up different positions because they were supported by their people. And they still have good relations with us. We stood by their side in hard times. If western countries had the same view of the MEK, they would fight over sheltering them. They would think that maybe in the future, the MEK might take control of a very important country in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East and we should have a good relationship with them. But we must know why no country accepted the group as if they are a piece of dirt. Now, why did Albania accept the group? As a country in Europe which faces serious problems and is far less developed compared to other countries due to its past, it seems that Albania is in hope of receiving support from western countries. A country that is politically, economically, and socially constrained will indeed need the help of others and in return, it will accept whatever imposed. I think the main reason was that Albania and Western countries made a deal in which Albania shelters the MEK in exchange for receiving Western support. This will, of course, cause serious problems for Albania and in terms of political issues, it is not something they are proud of.

Habilian: In your opinion, how could Albania's hosting of the MEK affect the country's efforts to join the European Union?

“ Albania is now playing a very dangerous political game by allowing a terrorist group to officially operate against a government in their country . ”

Mehmanparast: All countries that are members of the EU protect their own national interests. If a new country, which might cause trouble, is to become an EU member, they would explicitly disagree or make all sorts of excuses to prevent it. Why do you think they won't let Turkey join EU even though it is a NATO member and conforms to them in many political aspects? If Turkey, which is a country with Islamic orientation, becomes an EU member, other countries might think their interests will be jeopardized. Ukraine also aims to join the EU. Why didn't the Europeans allow it? Because they felt that Ukraine might cause them trouble because of Russia's sensitivities towards Ukraine. Now that conflict has arisen, everyone knows that if Ukraine were an EU member, the whole Europe would be involved. Why is NATO not willing to help Ukraine directly? Because helping Ukraine means open conflict with Russia. Therefore, EU members are really strict when it comes to accepting new members just to avoid possible negative consequences. Politically and economically speaking, Albania is far less developed than advanced European countries. It is now playing a very dangerous political game by allowing a terrorist group to officially operate against a government in their country. This will lead to adverse consequences for Albania. Albania has committed a huge mistake and it seems to me that it is too risky for the EU to allow Albania's membership, not at least in the near future.

In Memory of



the **Victims** of
the October 26
Terror Attack on
Shah Cheragh
Holy Shrine

When Will Iran Take Revenge on Albanian-based “Traitors”?

By Habilian Staff Writers

The remarks of the Intelligence Minister of Iran, Ismail Khatib, on June 25, 2022, on the anniversary of the June 28, 1981 terrorist attack which led to the assassination of the head of the Iranian judiciary and dozens of Iranian PMs and political figures, showed, once again, that Iran is still not satisfied with the presence of the MEK in Albania and Tirana's widespread support for the group.

In his statement on the occasion of the assassination of the head of Iran's judiciary by the MEK, Khatib wrote, “The dishonorable terrorists residing in Albania will never be safe from the fire of revenge for the 12000 who fell victim to their crimes.”

This has been the most extreme reaction of an Iranian official to Tirana's support for an Iranian terrorist group since their activity in Albania in 2013.

Iran-Albania relations have been strained since the MEK's expulsion from Iraq and being sheltered in Albania. In 1986, former Iraqi dictator Saddam invited the MEK to side with him and fight against Iran. From 2003, the group was put under pressure by Iraqi government and activists to leave Iraq, but no country was willing to shelter them until 2013 when, finally, Tirana accepted to give home to this group at the request of John Kerry -former US Secretary of State- in exchange for 25 million dollars.

Albanian officials said at the time that they had sheltered the group solely for humanitarian reasons and they would not allow the group to operate. However, in a short while, the MEK contacted a significant number of Albanian politicians, including the president, prime minister and PMs and they frequently visited the MEK's well-equipped modern camp. Also, many of Iran's staunch opponents in the United States went to the camp to deliver their nasty remarks about Iran addressing officials in Tehran.

Since then, relations of Israel and Saudi Arabia, as Iran's regional enemies, have been strengthened with Albania, and Tirana has expelled Iranian ambassadors and diplomats in two phases in 2018 and 2020.

On January 3, 2020, former Albanian president and Prime Minister Sali Berisha expressed satisfaction for assassination of the former Commander of the Quds Force General Qasem Soleimani, calling Iran a threat to the stability and peace in the Middle East. By this unpresented action, Berisha put Albania among very few countries which supported the US administration's illegal assassination of a foreign country's General.

The Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama's anti-Iranian speech at the UN General Assembly on September 27, 2019, in which he voiced support for the

MEK, along with the Albanian police's announcement in October 2019 of dismantling a "terrorist cell" belonged to the Quds Force which "had planned to attack the Iranian opposition [group MEK]", shows Tirana's determination to introduce itself as a country hostile to Iran, regardless of its possible consequences. The difference between Albania and other hostile countries toward Iran is that this country, due to the lack of good economic infrastructure and healthy political system, does not benefit from hostility to Tehran.

It was clear that these rapid developments would not go unnoticed by the media and analysts. The concern was that Albania, a country that had long dreamed of joining the European Union, was turning the Balkans and Southeast Europe into a point of tension and crisis instead of addressing its own internal problems. The tension has nothing to do with the region and belongs to a middle eastern US-backed terrorist group.

Referring to the Iran-US-Saudi confrontation and support of senior officials of Trump administration for the MEK, Washington Post and CNN analyst Frida Ghitis described the group's presence in Albania in a piece in the World Politics Review "one of today's most dangerous geopolitical conflicts in the world right now" which Tirana is unexpectedly drawn into it.

"The country is in the midst of a full-blown political crisis that has at times turned violent and whose outcome is still uncertain. A member of NATO, Albania has also been trying unsuccessfully to join the European Union for years; its current domestic turmoil makes that goal even more distant. To make matters worse, Albania's infighting has turned it into an inviting target for malicious actors seeking to take advantage of a distracted, divided nation.", writes World Policy Review.

It goes without saying that by destructive actors, the author means the US, Israel,



MEK members at the "Ashraf 3" camp in Albania at an event. Photo: BIRN

and Saudi Arabia which are now fighting their battle with Iran in Albania's field. She believes that by sheltering the MEK, Albania has come into Iran's spotlight. Undoubtedly, the increase in Iran's attention is not only due to the presence of the MEK in this country, but also to the activities of countries hostile to Iran in Albania.

In his speech on January 8, 2020 in the aftermath of General Soleimani's assassination at the hands of the US, the Iranian Supreme Leader described Albania "a very small but evil" country in Europe where Americans with the help of "some Iranian traitors", namely the MeK, got together to conspire against the Islamic Republic.

In January 16, one week after Ayatollah Khamenei's remarks, Turkish TRT described Albania a frontline in the proxy battle between Iran and the US forefront of the Iran-US proxy war and wrote, "While the United States and Israel are in open conflict with Iran, Albania by hosting MEK has become a major centre of anti-Iranian propaganda in the world".

Iranian officials have criticized the Albanian government on various occasions and requested that it stop supporting the MEK, which assassinated thousands of Iranians in the 1980s and 1990s. Due to Washington's backing of Tirana, however, the request has not been fulfilled yet.

The unprecedented remarks of the Iranian Intelligence Minister, as one of the highest-ranking security officials, about revenge suggest that Iranian officials may take different measures. The word revenge in Minister's speech targeted the MEK; however, this group is officially

based in Albania and Khatib addressed them as Albanian terrorists. It seems that whatever action Iran takes will have repercussions for Albania as well.

The Albania-based MEK is taking an oppositional stance against Iran's political system speaking out against Iran's nuclear program and nuclear talks with the West, and calling for more severe sanctions. It is highly unlikely that Tehran remains silent in the face of these actions.

Given that in the past two years, the Iran-Israel battle has been taking place at cyberspace and infrastructure levels of the two countries, it does not seem remote that Iran's growing anger over MEK's activities will transfer the tensions to the Balkans and Albania. The response to Israeli attacks on Iran can be given in Albania as a country close to Israel, which happens to shelter the largest terrorist group opposing Iranian government.

Nevertheless, the Iranian Intelligence Minister's remarks show that Iranian officials are now leveling more intense criticism at Albania, albeit indirectly, and to safeguard its citizens' interests, Albania as a small country in Southeastern Europe, must reconsider its support for the MEK, which has been on a number of Western terror lists including the US, and that has no ties to Albanian people.

Exploring the spirit of violent cults

What Hashashin, Colonia Dignidad and MeK Have in Common?

By Reza Alghurabi*

The striking similarities among cults, especially the armed and violent ones have always been thought-provoking. When studying the history of these cults and their backgrounds, almost the most notable difference among them is how geographically distant and how closely comparable their leaders are. These extraordinary similarities between cults and their leaders are surprising. Hence, a researcher studying the history of the Nizari Ismailis (Hashashin), Colonia Dignidad, and the MEK will in fact consider them all as one group. An important part of these commonalities is the result of the cults' leadership style.

But what are these commonalities? Here is a brief overview of them. I should mention that in this article, I have drawn upon an interview with Ahmad Reza Karimi, a former and high-ranking member of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK), with the Iranian quarterly Siyosatnameh.



Colonia Dignidad children with posters in defense of their leader, accused of pedophilia. Photo: Luis Chang/Reuters

1. Cult leaders are generally self-proclaimed. That is, in addition to establishing cults themselves and assuming undisputed leadership, all cult members do not object to this issue due to the brain-washing and special training they receive, and they see their leader as the only competent person in the group.

2 - The cult leader is unrivaled and has unlimited power. The behaviors and actions of Massoud Rajavi-leader of the Mujahedin-e Khalq cult over the past four decades is a case in point. All the responsibilities of the people under his control have been defined, and ultimately it is Rajavi who makes the decisions without anyone having the right to object or oppose.

3. The difference between cults with Islamic orientation and the religious and traditional Muslim community is that religious principles are followed by Muslims and are part of the definite and inviolable religious texts while cults do not adhere to these principles and the leader often manipulates them. In cults, the leader imposes certain ideologies.

4. The ideology of a cult can be a blend of the teachings of religions, sects and schools of thought. Views of the Nizari Isma'ilism, for instance, draw eclectically on the works and beliefs of the Neoplatonism, Socrates, Pythagoras, Al-Farabi, the Mu'tazilites, and the Twelver Shi'ism. In the case of the MEK, it is a combination of Marxism, Islam and Shiism.

5 - Speaking in a mysterious, exclusive

jargon is another characteristic of cults. For example, the MEK's rank and file did not understand the meaning of some of the terms and concepts used in the group and they were not expected to. What happened in the leadership circle should not have leaked out since others were considered enemies. Hanifnejad, founder of the Mojahedin-e Khalq terrorist group, would call his opponents people who block the path of evolution. The terms used by

the MEK are compiled in a book. Even the MEK's media use literature that is not currently common among Iranian media and citizens. This is due to the isolation and cultic characteristics of this group.

6 - The leader in the cult is not accountable to any individuals, groups or institutions. No one has the authority or courage to voice their own opinions even if

they are scientifically and academically superior to the cult leader. Self-criticism sessions under "pool sessions" or "current operation sessions" held in the MEK are a case in point.

7- Eliminations and assassinations are commonly utilized techniques in cults. In contemporary Iran, no group or movement had attempted suicide bombing to eliminate its opponents. But the MEK was the first to launch suicide bombings. Assassination of Ayatollah Dastgheib, a religious leader in Shiraz along with 20 other civilians, by a 15-year-old female suicide bomber under the influence of the MEK is the group's first instance of such acts.

8- Accusing the opponents of being

“ They may have freely entered the cult, but it is not possible for them to leave voluntarily, and once in the cult, they are merely executors of Rajavi's commands . ”

mercenary, infidel, apostate, anti-religion is another characteristic of cults. Interestingly, hundreds of MEK members who have fled the cult over the past two decades are all unbelievably called mercenaries. This way, their elimination or character assassination becomes much easier.

9 - Cult leaders also tend to not appear in public very often, which creates a kind of mystery about their personality. Massoud Rajavi's long absence, rumors about his death, the cult not being accountable about his fate, and his occasional voice messages are perfect examples. Hassan Sabah, leader of the Nizari Ismailis, displayed similar characteristics.

10. Questioning, doubting and objecting to cult leaders and their teachings and actions are all unpardonable sins. Memoirs of former cult members demonstrate how many people were eliminated or tortured in questionable ways during the MEK's presence in Iraq due to doubting and criticizing the group's goals. Now in Albania, MEK members know very well that they must not inquire about Massoud Rajavi's fate.

The above-mentioned are the common characteristics of cult leaders. It should be noted that cults have at least three common, distinguishing characteristics. MEK Members have no individual will or authority. They may have freely entered the cult, but it is not possible for them to leave voluntarily, and once in the cult, they are merely executors of Rajavi's commands. Forced separation of spouses, prohibition of education, marriage, contact with family members, using the Internet, cellphone and satellite networks, not allowing criticism, and compulsory veiling, are only part of the limitations

imposed on group members and they have no power to change the status quo. Second, absolute obedience to cult leader leads to rise in the hierarchy. Determining various responsibilities and positions in the MEK cult such as the first superintendent etc., is within this framework and of course, it is not exclusive to the cult of Rajavi. These people with important positions have no free will and cannot oppose the leader's decisions. Offering positions is just a way of implying that the more one obeys, the higher they'll get in the hierarchy.

Third is the concept of utopia in cults implying that the condition inside cults is excellent and life outside cults is full of dangers and threats. In addition, cults propagate an ideal image of a society that will be founded by them. Such an unrealistic portrayal of a utopia is evident in the MEK. They always envisage ruling Iran but the question is, how can a cult, which treats its members harshly, imposes all types of restrictions and constraints, and has assassinated adversaries for the past 4 decades, form a utopia?

This megalomania has been a common feature of all cults throughout history. They may differ in name, place, and time, but a common spirit reign over them all.

* Researcher on terrorism

A Review of Freedom of Mind: Helping Loved Ones Leave Controlling People, Cults and Beliefs

By Salim Seddighy

A former cult member and a leading researcher on cults and mind control, Steven Hassan has been actively defending the freedom of mind for decades. His influential work has brought immense relief to innumerable individuals and families across the globe who fell victim to cults and mind control.

His book titled FREEDOM OF MIND; Helping Loved Ones Leave Controlling People, Cults and Beliefs includes 13 chapters where Hassan explains his novel approach called SIA (Strategic Interactive Approach). The SIA focuses on the process of change and the growth of the family and support network as well as the cult member. When each family member is responsible for growth and change, the cult member's perspective changes. The SIA aims to help the cult member realize that he has been under the influence of the group and eventually, recognize the pervasiveness of the group's control over his life.

In chapter one, Hassan talks about common characteristics of cults such as authoritarian leadership, deceptive practices and tightly controlled emotional and

intellectual environment. In chapter two, he introduces his BITE model as a practical tool to assess how a person or group controls a person's life. The four parts of his model include Behavior Control, Information Control, Thought Control and Emotions Control. In chapter three, Hassan mentions the attitudes and beliefs essential in SIA.

From chapter four onwards, the required measures to be taken in order to successfully implement the SIA are discussed. Initially, one has to evaluate the situation. Questions such as how the individual is doing, how the individual got stuck in the cult in the first place and how deeply he is involved should be asked. Then, a team that generally consists of immediate family members and close friends must be formed.

Every single member of the team needs to be empowered and their problems should be resolved first. This will pave the way for better interaction with the cult member. In addition, recognizing characteristics of the cult in which your loved one is involved is necessary. It



helps to identify specific ways that the cult deceives members and keeps them dependent whether by distorting the truth, misinterpreting religious texts, or deliberately spreading lies about its critics.

Chapter eight deals with the dual identities of cult members and how they vacillate between an authentic identity and a cult identity and when dealing with them, you have to be sensitive to the differences between the two identities. Initially, you need to develop rapport with and show interest in the cult identity. Afterward, you have to reconnect with and elicit the authentic identity. This can be done through the SIA since it reconnects the person to his or her past memories and experiences, facilitates positive exposure to non-members, provides enhanced access to outside information and brings to consciousness the negative experiences the person has had in the group. In chapter eight, effective and goal-oriented communication strategies within the SIA are discussed and techniques such as anticipating and rehearsing best case, worst case and most probable responses and role-play situations are explained.

In chapter ten, cult members are helped to unlock their irrational fears or phobias through three steps. In the first step, the cult member is told what a phobia is, how it differs from a legitimate fear, and its potential impact. In the second step, you explain how other destructive groups or people deliberately install

phobias to control people. You provide several examples of cult phobias, and ask the cult member what he thinks of these other groups. You give examples of how former members of other groups came to understand phobia indoctrination, and applied the cure to themselves. Finally, in step three, you discuss the specifics of your loved one's relationship or group. Once the person sees that his situation—like the other groups you discussed—involves phobia indoctrination, much of the hold will loosen.

Chapter eleven deals with how friends and families of the cult member should get prepared and become a team to be able to encourage change and growth and promote the cult member's freedom of mind. The two-day preparation meeting is a chance for all key family members, friends and other resource people, like former members to come together and truly become a team while learning the essentials. The main focus of the Strategic Intervention is to inspire the family and other Team members to do mini-interactions. It is hoped that these will motivate the cult member

to seek out information-talk with former members, research on the Internet, or arrange to meet qualified professionals. Ideally, a loved one will leave the group after a series of successful mini-interactions. If after many interactions your loved one is still firmly entrenched in the group, you may want to consider a formal, three-day intervention. Chapter twelve explains how the intervention should take place. The first day is spent

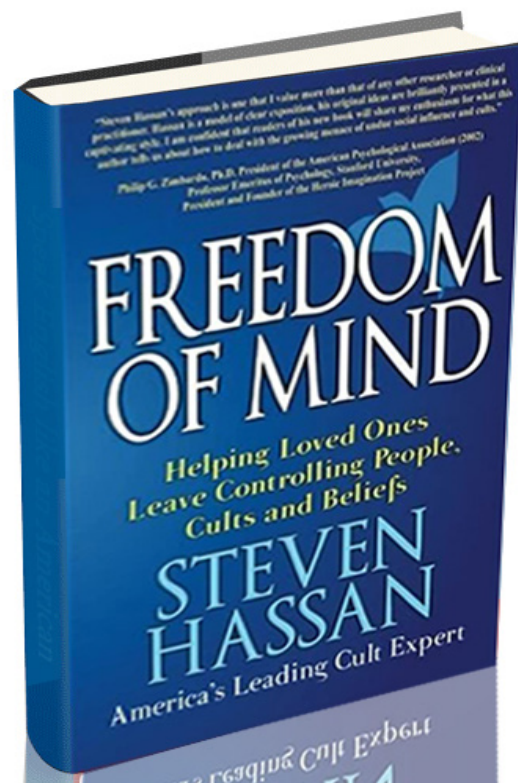
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**Mujahedeen Khalq is
not only irrelevant to
the cause of Iran's
democratic activists, but
a totalitarian cult that
will come back to haunt
us .**
”

building rapport and trust, gathering information, getting everyone to connect as much as possible with the cult member, and laying the groundwork for the next two days. On day two, the intervention delves more deeply into the cult influence. An expert might talk about phobias and do a phobia intervention with the person. Talking about personal experiences or introducing a former cult member might be helpful. On day three, more in-depth discussions are pursued about the specific beliefs of the group, such as theological questions. Day three builds on the progress made in the previous two days. Hopefully, by this time, the person is making important connections, and asking direct questions about his own group. Finally in chapter thirteen, the author calls for global awareness of how sophisticated destructive cults have become and of the fact that they are using the Internet to manipulate and recruit innocent people. According to Hassan, social influence is everywhere and there needs to be a way to help people to easily discern what is happening, how it works and how to detect and protect themselves from negative influence.

One example of such groups is the Iranian terrorist group led by Maryam Rajavi, called the Mujahedeen Khalq or Warriors of God. Elizabeth Rubin, a contributor to the New York Times Magazine, maintains that the group is in fact a cult. Rubin writes that “an unlikely chorus of the group’s backers—some of whom have received speaking fees, others of whom are inspired by their conviction that the Iranian government must fall at any cost—have gathered around Mojahedin_Khalq (MeK) at conferences in capitals across the globe. Indeed, the Rajavis and Mujahedeen Khalq are spending millions in an attempt

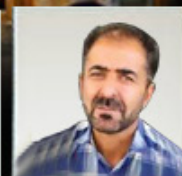
to persuade the Obama administration, and in particular Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, to take them off the national list of terrorist groups”. She adds, “Mujahedeen Khalq is not only irrelevant to the cause of Iran’s democratic activists, but a totalitarian cult that will come back to haunt us.”

The author hopes that after reading this book, readers will be better able to protect themselves, their family and their society from the dangers of destructive groups and cults.



Victims of the ISIS Terror Attack in Shiraz

October 26, 2022





The Watchlist